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Mystery over Jeffrey Epstein's missing mate Jean-Luc Brunel

Jean-Luc Brunel was sipping champagne with the rich and beautiful before he heard an old mate had died. Now he's vanished.

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A member of Jeffrey Epstein's inner-circle has seemingly vanished without a trace since his disgraced friend was found dead in a New York prison cell.

French model scout Jean-Luc Brunel, who founded the Miami-based MC2 model agency with financial help from Epstein, was last seen in public sipping on pink champagne at a lavish party on July 5.

The 72-year-old was surrounded by France's rich and beautiful at the members-only Paris Country Club, having made his fortune over many decades as power player in the lucrative global fashion industry.

But less than 24 hours later, as he was likely brushing off a hangover from the previous evening, he received some news about his old friend Epstein.

Jean-Luc Brunel has seemingly vanished since the death of Jeffrey Epstein. Picture: BFM TV

He found out that the financier and convicted sex offender had been arrested again in a New Jersey airport and would be facing sex trafficking charges.

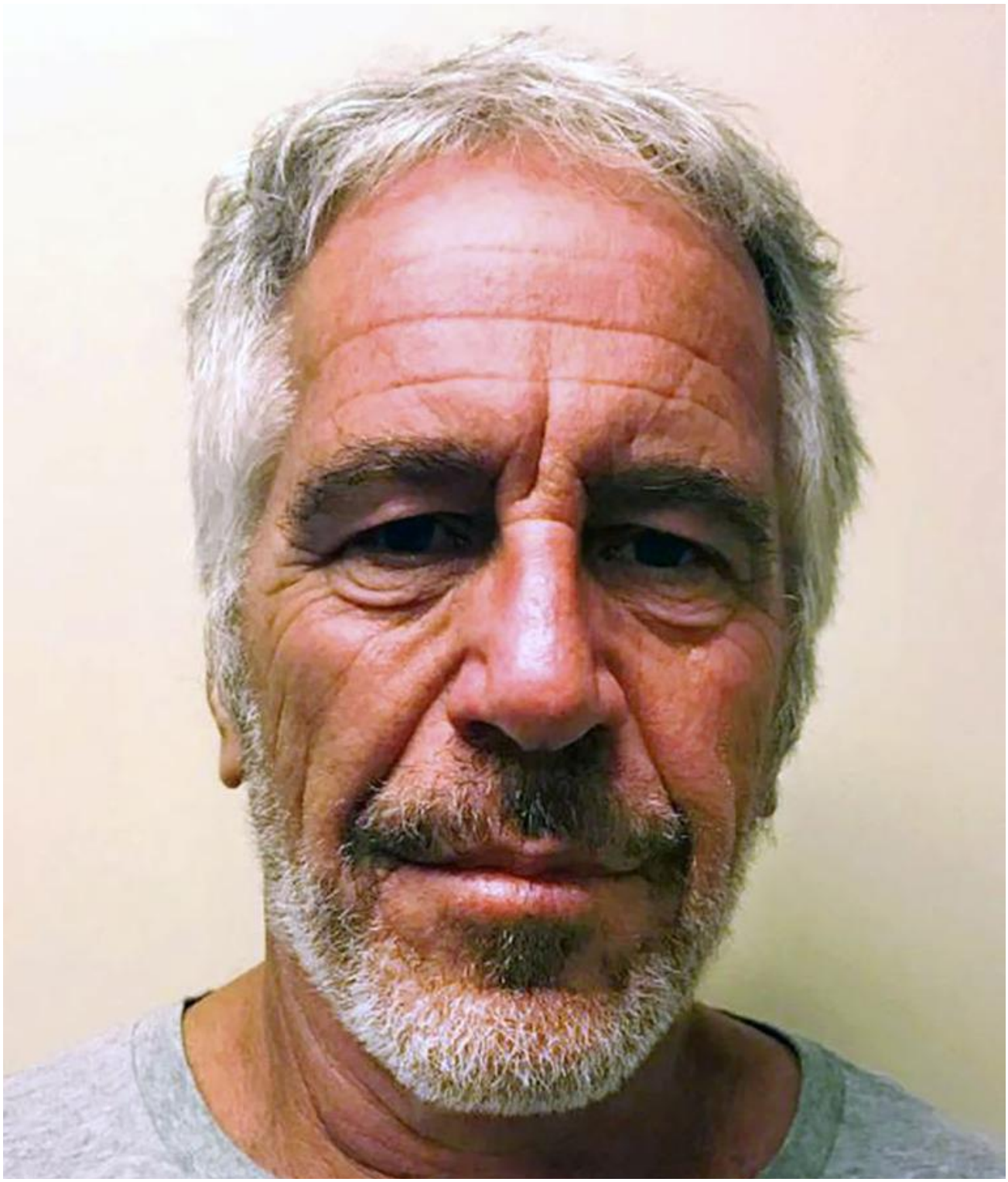
Epstein would be discovered dead in his cell just over a month later, on August 10, as he awaited trial over the charges.

And Mr Brunel has not been seen since that day.

The French fashion guru has strongly denied any wrongdoing in his work as a model agent or regarding his relationship with Epstein.

However, his disappearance along with several Epstein associates — like Ghislaine Maxwell, reportedly the financier's girlfriend at one point — has raised questions about how much they knew about their mate's illicit activities.

Epstein associate Ghislaine Maxwell has also vanished. Picture: Rob Kim/Getty/AFP



Epstein was facing sex trafficking charges.

Mr Brunel became a big name in the fashion world in the 1980s as a scout at the Karin Models agency in Paris. He claims to have launched the careers of some of the industry's best-known names like Jerry Hall, Angie Everhart and Christy Turlington.

However, his close friendship with Epstein has cast the media spotlight on him again.

When exactly Mr Brunel became friends with the disgraced US money manager is unclear, however it would have been no later than the 2005 launch of MC2, which Epstein financed.

Since then, the pair have been close. Mr Brunel even flew on his private jet to visit Epstein in jail in Florida.

Mr Brunel claims he launched Christy Turlington's career.

He also claims to have scouted Angie Everhart.

Virginia Giuffre – a longtime Epstein accuser who recently claimed in a high-profile BBC interview she had sex with Prince Andrew at Ms Maxwell's London home when she was 17 – alleged in court filings that Mr Brunel brought teenage girls to the US on model visas.

She alleged the girls were then "farmed out" by him to Epstein and others for sex.

The 36-year-old, who now lives in Australia, also alleged she was made to have sex with Mr Brunel by Epstein several times in Epstein's homes.

In 2015, Mr Brunel denied any involvement in Epstein's alleged offences. French prosecutors have not named him and he has not been charged with any crimes.

"I strongly deny having committed any illicit act or any wrongdoing in the course of my work as a scouter or model agencies manager," he told *The Guardian*.

Mr Brunel also denies allegation that he had sex with Ms Giuffre, formerly

Virginia Roberts.

Meanwhile in Paris, police are looking closely at Epstein's associates and trying to find out whether sex-trafficking took place on French soil.

Virginia Giuffre claims she was made to have sex with Mr Brunel, a claim he denies. Picture: BBC

As part of the investigations, one of the model agencies which was founded by Mr Brunel was searched.

The model scout was nowhere to be seen.

Officers also raided Epstein's Parisian apartment on Avenue Foch, one of the capital's most expensive streets

French media reports that Epstein's French-Brazilian butler opened the door to the Parisian home, which contains around 50 rooms, including one dedicated to massage.

French newspaper, *Le Parisien* reported the apartment showed signs of having been cleaned out.

Sexual abuse victims are now crying out for Epstein's alleged enablers to be

Sexual abuse victims are now crying out for Epstein's alleged enablers to be tracked down – particularly since they were protected for over a decade by Epstein's notorious 2007 plea deal.

When Epstein admitted that he solicited prostitution from a minor, he was given a promise that he and "any potential co-conspirators" would avoid further charges.

Mr Brunel made his fortune in the fashion industry. Picture: MDP-Robert Espalieu/Starface/Polaris

Now the disgraced money manger is dead and it appears the investigation into his associates in France has come to a standstill.

However, news.com.au has spoken to a former US police officer John Mark Dougan who has been trying to track down Mr Brunel.

He said he has traced Mr Brunel's iPhone to an up-market holiday area in Brazil.

Sources have told Sky News that both Mr Brunel and Ms Maxwell have been spotted recently in the Brazilian riviera.

However, when the news outlet's reporters showed up at the Infinity Blue Resort and Spa in Santa Catarina, where their phones have been traced to, there was no sign of either of them.